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FLOOR COVERINGS.

PASSING through the precincts of Guildhall one day, our attention was drawn to an old fragment of mosaic pavement that had once formed the flooring of a Roman villa, built some twenty centuries ago upon the banks of the Thames, and brought to light upon excavating the foundations of one of those large palatial piles of offices, the erection of which, in place of the dingy tumble-down tenements now happily fast disappearing, is rapidly converting London into one of the handsomest cities in the world. Our thoughts, at sight of the old Roman mosaic work, were led to dwell upon the various kinds of floor-coverings that have been in vogue at different times, and in their turn have passed out of fashion in this great city, since the day when the Italian workmen joined together those tiny stones to pave the villa of a Lucius or a Sallust.

When the Romans left the shores of Albion, and a semi-barbarism once more stepped in, straw, reeds and rushes formed for many long years the covering of the floors of the houses of the nobles, clergy and better class. Clean red or white sand, was much used by the common people, and up to a very recent date the sanded floor was a common sight in many of the old taverns not only of Lon-

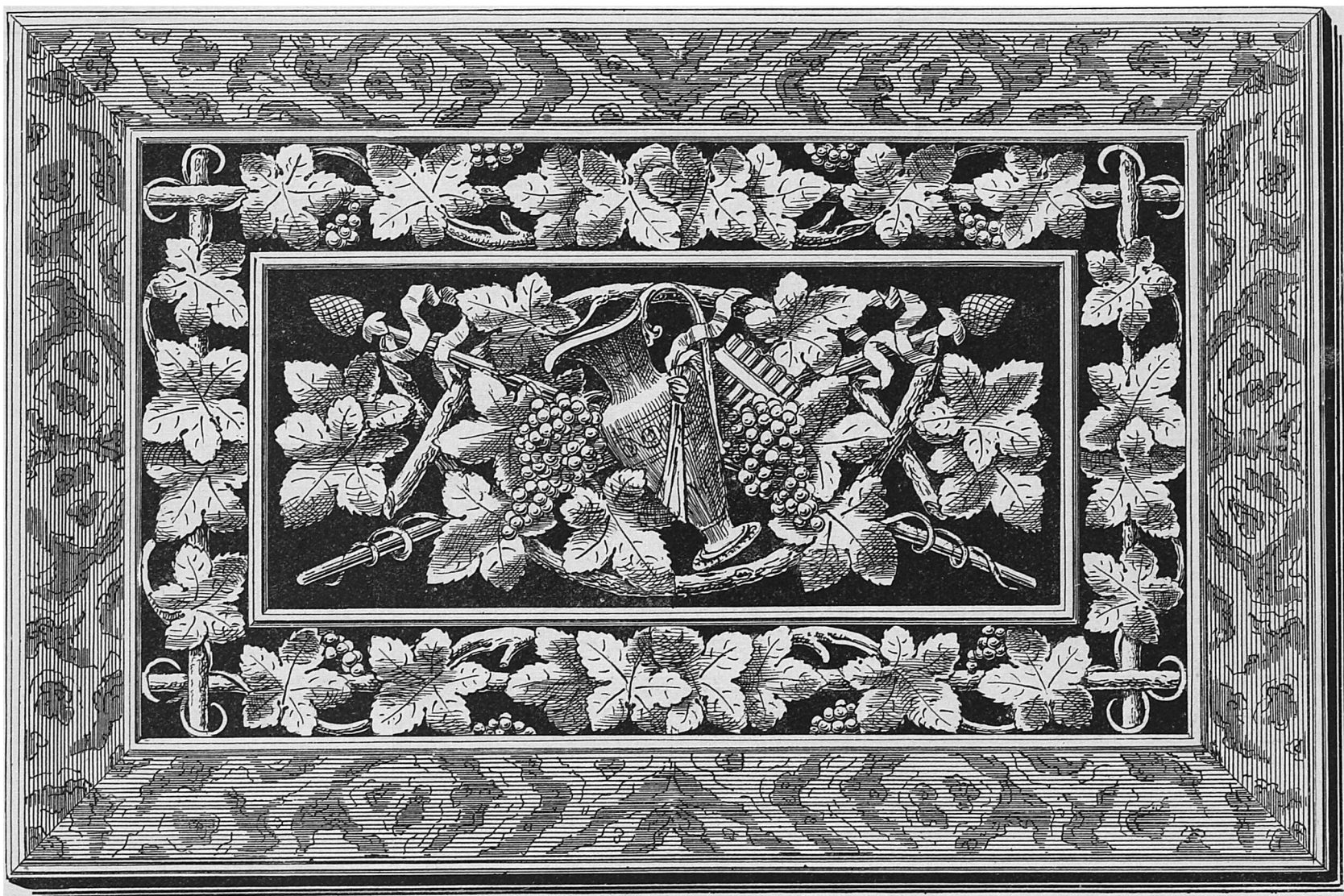
propaganda the carpets of the East have had a celebrity peculiar to themselves. From them have really sprung all the many varieties of floor coverings known generally as carpets in the present day, under the names of Brussels, Kidderminster, Wilton, Axminster, Aubusson, Venetian, etc. All of these are more or less imitations and modifications of Oriental carpets—Persian, Turkey, Syrian and Indian.

At the commencement of the present century Turkish carpets were rarities and luxuries in England, but seldom and only to be met with in the houses of noblemen or merchant princes connected with the Levant and Oriental trades. Within the last few years the beauty, durability and comfort of these carpets have been appreciated, more particularly since what is known as the "esthetic craze" has set in, and aided by the "fashion of the day" (for unless an article does become fashionable no matter how intrinsically beautiful or good it may be, it does not get generally adopted) Oriental floor coverings of all sorts and sizes, from the cheap cotton Indian durrie and the Kurd and Beloochistan rugs, to the sumptuous Persian and Turkey carpets, have grown immensely in popular favor. The trade in these has rapidly and wonderfully increased, and the looms of Ouchack and Koulba in Anatolia, a province of Asiatic Turkey, find employment for many thousands of workmen and

whether anything is woven nowadays in quite so elaborate a style as that described in the story of Schemselnihar and the Persian Prince as forming the floor covering of the former's palace. After a minute description of the beauties of the principal chamber, we are told that the carpet of this splendid salon was "composed of a single piece of cloth of gold, upon which were woven bunches of roses in red and white silk." The valleys of Khorassan (the scene of many of the events in "Lallah Rookh"), Kurdistan, Kesman and the district of Irân, are now the chief places of manufacture, those from Kurdistan being esteemed the best.

The Indian carpets are various in style and texture; and come from all parts of that collection of countries and states classed together under the one word India. Cashmere, celebrated also for its unrivalled shawls; Afghanistan and the Punjab on the extreme north; Scinde and Beloochistan on the north and west; and all the countries of Central India, including the dominions of the Mizam and the districts of the Malabar Coast, each produce their specialties in carpets. Rugs is the more correct term, for unlike the productions of Persia and Turkey, which are made as large as thirty feet square, they are of comparatively small size.

It may be remembered that the enchanted carpet purchased at Bisnagar by Prince Houssain



TOPS FOR ORNAMENTAL TABLES. DESIGNED AND EXECUTED BY G. A. WEISZ, KESMARK, HUNGARY.

These tables are a new departure in the line of ornamental tables. The foundation is in ebony, and the very striking relief carving in white holly, forming a very agreeable contrast. The carving is protected by French plate, which is fastened by the rim of the table, thus presenting a perfectly even surface, making the table also a useful piece of furniture. The lower part of the table is in black walnut, and correspondingly ornamented, presenting two very rich sides.

don but in several parts of England. Here and there may still be found old-fashioned country houses where the well scrubbed boards are sprinkled with bright sand, and in many a village tap-room the freshly sanded floor indicates the attention of "mine host" to the comfort of his rustic guests.

At the time of the Crusades the working of tapestry became one of the employments of ladies—the fashionable work of the day—but this costly material, the product of fair fingers, was employed for curtains and wall hangings, and only in very rare instances, such as for royal houses or churches, was it used for floor coverings. As the valiant knights and their followers returned from the holy wars—at least such of them as were lucky enough to get safe back—they brought with them many of the customs and manufactures of the East. Every true believer of the Prophet carries with him wherever he goes his little oblong square of carpet, on which he kneels to offer up his daily prayers; and from the very earliest days of the Mahomedan

workwomen, to say nothing of children, in producing the large amount of these beautiful carpets to supply the markets of Western Europe and America. The home consumption of Turkish carpets in Turkey itself and Egypt is very small, in comparison to the large quantities exported from Smyrna for the use of the Giaour nations of the West. England is by far the largest customer, taking about 60 per cent. of the whole. Next comes France, to which country about one-fourth of the products of the Anatolian looms finds its way, and the remainder is sent to the United States.

Turkish carpets are always made in one single piece, and take almost as many months to manufacture as the same quantity in superficial extent of ordinary Brussels or tapestry carpet, which are made by steam machinery, take days, and their durability is in like proportion. Who ever heard of a Turkish carpet being worn out in one generation? Persian carpets are of fine texture and more costly, though we may be permitted to doubt

for forty purses is mentioned as being "about six feet square," on which the three brothers are described as sitting together when they were transported to their father's palace. The use of these rug-sized carpets is now becoming very general, and few houses are to be found, possessing any pretensions to comfort, where one or more of these Oriental floor coverings are not to be met with in hall, library, or bedroom.—*Building and Engineering Times*.

THE DECORATOR AND FURNISHER is without doubt the most beautiful and complete of all American periodicals devoted to like subjects. Beside the high artistic character of its illustrations, its letter-press is equally meritorious. Even its advertisements are illustrated with such careful attention to details, such harmonious finish, such exquisite softness of tone, that they attract the eye as readily as finished engravings in most other works.—*Washington (D.C.) Republican*, Nov. 10, 1883.